

LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY FOR:

June 9, 2003

NRCS, Office of Legislative Affairs
Room 5121, South Agriculture Bldg.
(202) 720-2771

www.nrcs.usda.gov/about/legislative

For additional information contact:

Douglas J. McKalip
Eric W. Carlson
Sharyn C. Alvarez

=====

LAST WEEK

LEGISLATION OF NOTE

The following Bills of significance to NRCS and conservation have been introduced:

| Bill | Sponsor | Purpose |
|------------|------------|---|
| H. R. 2310 | Rahall, WV | To protect, conserve, and restore native fish, wildlife, and their natural habitats on Federal lands and non-Federal lands through cooperative, incentive-based grants to control, mitigate and eradicate harmful non-native species, and for other purposes. |

FARM BILL IMPLEMENTATION HEARING - The House Agriculture Subcommittee on Conservation, Credit, and Rural Development and Research (Chairman Lucas, OK) held a public hearing on Wednesday, June 4, to review conservation technical assistance and the implementation of the Conservation Title of the 2002 Farm Bill. Deputy Secretary James Moseley was a witness. NRCS Chief Bruce Knight and FSA Administrator James Little accompanied the Deputy Secretary and responded to questions from Members of the Subcommittee.

Deputy Secretary Moseley testified regarding the USDA conservation programs and specifically the technical assistance necessary to help farmers and ranchers. He provided the history, challenges, and future direction on technical assistance programs.

Chairman Lucas (OK) asked about the impact of current CRP signup on technical assistance on other programs such as EQIP. Other questions brought forth involved the Regional Equity provisions of the 2002 Farm Bill, Farm and Ranch Land Protection allocations in several states, and if the Grassland Reserve Program would be a national program this year. Deputy Secretary Moseley indicated the GRP would be a national program with signups beginning soon.

Another issue brought forth was the continual expansion of the Ground and Surface Water Program through EQIP. Chief Knight indicated this program would continue to expand as opportunities to meet the goals of the program were presented.

LOOKING AHEAD

RESOURCES LAND BILLS MARKUP - The House Resources Committee (Chairman Pombo, CA) will mark up pending bills that deal with issues of developing comprehensive water strategies, the settlement of water rights claims, bridge construction adjacent to Folsom Dam, and to amend the Reclamation Projects Authorization and Adjustment Act of 1992.

Date TBA

Time TBA

1334 Longworth Building

QUALITY OF FINANCIAL INFORMATION AT AGRICULTURE, EDUCATION DEPARTMENTS AND AID OVERSIGHT HEARING – The Government Efficiency and Financial Management Subcommittee (Chairman Platts, PA) of the House Government Reform Committee will hold an oversight hearing titled “Fixing the Financials – Featuring United States Department of Agriculture, Department of Education and U.S. Agency for International Development.”

Date TBA

Time TBA

2154 Rayburn Building

WESTERN WATER ISSUES OVERSIGHT HEARING – The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee (Chairman Domenici, NM) will hold an oversight hearing on the Interior Department programs that address western water issues. This hearing was originally scheduled for May 6.

Date TBA

Time TBA

366 Dirksen Building
